

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 EB-07

COME-00 OMB-01 /074 W

----- 037530

R 270940Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4669

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

CINCPAC

UNCLAS SINGAPORE 0955

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR EGEN ASEAN

SUBJECT: PM LEE KUAN YEW ANNOUNCES ASEAN INDUSTRIAL PROJECTS
AGREEMENT.

SUMMARY: IN HIS FAREWELL PRESS CONFERENCE ON BALI
FEBRUARY 25, SINGAPORE PRIME MINISTER LEE KUAN YEW DISCUSSED
HIS IMPRESSIONS OF THE ASEAN SUMMIT MEETING. SPEAKING FOR ONE
HOUR AT WELL ATTENDED PRESS CONFERENCE, REPORTED IN FEB 26
STRAITS TIMES ARTICLE BY SPECIAL CORRESPONDENTS COVERING
BALI SUMMIT, PM DISCUSSED AGREEMENT TO ESTABLISH ONE MAJOR
INDUSTRIAL PROJECT IN EACH ASEAN COUNTRY, ANSWERED QUESTIONS
ON THE ASEAN CONCEPT OF PEACE, FREEDOM AND NEUTRALITY,
INSURGENCY AND EXTERNAL THREATS TO SECURITY IN REGION. HE
CLEARLY IMPLIED THAT IT WOULD BE USEFUL TO HAVE SOME US AIR
AND NAVAL BASE FACILITIES IN THE REGION IN THE EVENT THE ZONE OF
PEACE, FREEDOM AND NEUTRALITY WAS NOT RESPECTED BY ONE OF THE
OTHER MAJOR POWERS. END SUMMARY.

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1. SPEAKING TO MORE THAN 200 JOURNALISTS AT A FAREWELL NEWS CONFERENCE ON BALI WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 25, PM LEE KUAN YEW DESCRIBED PROPOSED PLANS TO SET UP FIVE MAJOR INDUSTRIAL PROJECTS- ONE IN EACH ASEAN MEMBER COUNTRY. ACCORDING TO LEE, AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE ON THE FIVE SPECIFIC PROJECTS SHOULD BE REACHED AT NEXT MONTH'S ECONOMIC MINISTERS' CONFERENCE IN KUALA LUMPUR.

2. DECLINING TO GO INTO MUCH DETAIL ON THE TYPE OF PROJECTS ENVISIONED, LEE STATED THAT SINGAPORE IS NOT PARTICULAR ON THIS POINT AND FOR ITS OWN PROJECT MIGHT CONSIDER OFFERING PETROCHEMICALS. ALTHOUGH TIMETABLE FOR PROPOSED INDUSTRIES WOULD VARY CONSIDERABLY, LEE UNDERScoreD THE NECESSITY FOR PROCEEDING EXPEDITIOUSLY ON PROJECTS WITH LONG LEAD TIME, EMPHASIZING THAT "ALL WE ARE INTERESTED IN IS HAVING AGREED ON THE FIVE PROJECTS AND THE PREFERENTIAL TRADING ARRANGEMENTS, TO GET THESE OFF THE GROUND." IN SO DOING, LEE CONCLUDED, THE ASEAN REGION WILL "RE-ESTABLISH A CLIMATE OF CONFIDENCE, WHICH ... IS A TOUCHSTONE OF PEACE, STABILITY, AND ECONOMIC GROWTH." HE ALSO EXPRESSED HOPE THERE WOULD BE FAVORABLE CREDIT FACILITIES FROM JAPAN, WESTERN EUROPE AND THE US FOR PURCHASE OF INDUSTRIAL MACHINERY ON LESS ONEROUS THAN STRICT COMMERCIAL TERMS.

3. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION ABOUT FUTURE ASEAN TRADE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, LEE COMMENTED THAT ASEAN COUNTRIES "MUST ACHIEVE WHAT WAS POSSIBLE FOR THE PRESENT AND THEN THEY WOULD HAVE TO DECIDE THE NEXT STEP" BUT "LET US DECIDE WHAT IT IS WE WANT.... IN THE LONG TERM... THEN WORK SYSTEMATICALLY TOWARD THOSE GOALS.".... "BUT FOR THE MOMENT WE GO ALONG WITH (THE FIVE PROJECTS AND PREFERENTIAL TRADING ARRANGEMENT). WE THINK IT IS CONCRETE. WE SUPPORT IT AS A FIRST STEP."

4. ASKED WHAT ASEAN EXPECTED OF JAPAN, LEE REPLIED SOMEWHAT FLIPPANTLY THOUGH CHARACTERISTICALLY, "SPEAKING FOR MYSELF, I NEVER EXPECT ANYTHING FROM ANYBODY. I EXPECT ALWAYS TO GIVE SOMETHING IN RETURN FOR WHAT I GET." HE THEN SUGGESTED THE POSSIBILITY OF MORE EQUAL TERMS OF TRADE AND TRANSFERS OF TECHNOLOGY.

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5. ASKED TO EXPLAIN THE CONTRADICTION BETWEEN THE ASEAN CONCEPT OF PEACE AND NEUTRALITY AND THE PRESENCE OF US BASES IN THE REGION, LEE STATED THAT SOME NAVAL AND AIR BASE FACILITIES MAY BE USEFUL SO THAT SOME BALANCE CAN BE MAINTAINED SHOULD ONE OR MORE GREAT POWER NOT RESPECT THE ASEAN REGION AS A ZONE OF PEACE, FREEDOM AND NEUTRALITY. FURTHER ON EXTERNAL THREATS, LEE SAID THE THREAT TO ASEAN WAS FROM WITHIN AND IT WAS INSURGENCY,

ARISING OUT OF POLITICAL, SOCIAL DISCONTENT AND DISAFFECTION.

"THE DANGER IS THAT GREAT POWERS THEMSELVES, OR THROUGH INTERMEDIARIES, WILL FUEL INSURGENCIES WITH ARMS, ARMS MANUALS, AND INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO DO IT YOURSELF."

QUOTING THE SAYING THAT POWER COMES OUT OF THE BARREL OF A GUN, MR LEE SAID THAT BY COURTESY OF THE US CONGRESS AND ADMINISTRATION, MANY MILLION BARRELS WERE LEFT BEHIND, FROM WHICH POWER SPRINGS, NOT ONLY IN VIETNAM, BUT ALSO CAMBODIA.

HOLDRIDGE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT, PROGRAMS (PROJECTS), PRESS CONFERENCES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 27 FEB 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976SINGAP00955
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760075-0320
From: SINGAPORE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t1976024/aaaaaded.tel
Line Count: 125
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: castelsl
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 19 JUL 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <19 JUL 2004 by schwenja>; APPROVED <08 SEP 2004 by castelsl>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PM LEE KUAN YEW ANNOUNCES ASEAN INDUSTRIAL PROJECTS AGREEMENT.
TAGS: PFOR, EGEN, ASEAN, (LEE KUAN YEW)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006